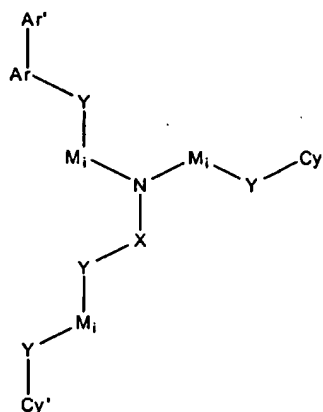


In the claims:

1. (Currently amended) A method of increasing expression of vascular endothelial growth factor (VEGF) in a subject with ischemic myocardial tissue, wherein the method comprises ~~improving myocardial function following myocardial ischemia comprising~~ administering to a subject in need thereof an effective amount of a hedgehog agonist, ~~effective to promote angiogenesis, thereby improving myocardial function following myocardial ischemia, wherein said angiogenesis includes increased expression of vascular endothelial growth factor (VEGF),~~ and wherein the hedgehog agonist is a small organic molecule represented by the general formula (XII):

Formula XII



wherein, as valence and stability permit,

Ar and Ar' independently represent substituted or unsubstituted aryl or heteroaryl rings;

Y, independently for each occurrence, is absent or represent -N(R)-, -O-, -S-, or -Se-;

X is selected from -C(=O)-, -C(=S)-, -S(O₂)-, -S(O)-, -C(=NCN)-, -P(=O)(OR₂)-, and a methylene group optionally substituted with 1-2 groups such as lower alkyl, alkenyl, or alkynyl groups;

M represents, independently for each occurrence, a substituted or unsubstituted methylene group, or two M taken together represent substituted or unsubstituted ethene or ethyne;